

THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

135

be, in comparison with our languages, like the wildest love-passion compared with marital custom." ¹ Every word has a history of accidents which have befallen it, the beginnings of which are lost in the abyss of time.² In the Middle Ages the word "Word" came to mean the Word of God with such distinctness that the romance languages adopted parabola, or derivatives from it, for "word."¹³ The students of linguistics recognize metaphor as another great mode of modifying the signification of words. By metaphor they mean the assembling of like things, and the selection and extirpation of unlike things.

136. Language and magic. Preuss offers an explanation of the origin of language which is interesting on account of its connection with the vast operation of magic : " Language owes its origin to the magic of tones and words. The difficulty of winning any notion about the beginnings of human speech lies in the fact that we cannot think of any cause which should give occasion for speech utterances. Such occasions are products of education, after language already existed. They are effects of language, not causes of it. . . . Language belongs, like play, dances, and fine arts, to the things which do not come on a direct line of development out of the instinctive satisfaction of life-needs and the other activities which create things of positive value, but it is the result of belief in magic, which prompted men to imitate noises made in labor, and other natural sounds, through a wide range, in order thereby to produce operations." ⁴

137. Language is a case of mores. Whitney said that language is an institution. He meant that it is in the folkways, or in the mores, since welfare is connected with

the folkways
of language, albeit by some superstition. He
adds : " In what-
ever aspect the general facts of language are
viewed, they
exhibit the same absence of reflection and
intention." ⁵ " No
one ever set himself deliberately at work to invent
or improve
language, — or did so, at least, with any valuable
and abiding
result. The work is all accomplished by a
continual satisfaction
of the needs of the moment, by ever yielding to an
impulse and

¹ Mauthner, 278.
184.

² *Ibid.*, 186.

⁸ *Ibid.*,

⁴ *Globus*, LXXXVII, 397.

[&] *Language*, 48, 51.